

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 00670 151525Z

42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR*10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OPR-02

SY-10 USSS-00 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00 AGR-20 FPC-01

SCEM-02 SCI-06 NEAE-00 /200 W
----- 105619

R 150810Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9024

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FOL TEL (CALCUTTA) RPTD FYI

QTE

O R 110620Z JAN 74

FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

TO RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 8845

INFO RUSBAY/AMCONSUL BOMBAY 1934

RUSBAS/AMCONSUL MADRAS 1861

C O N F I D E N T I A L

LIMITED OFICAL USE CALCUTTA 0066

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

SUBJ: VIOLENCE AND VOTES: WESTERN INDIA LEADS THE WAY?

REF: A. NEW DELHI 0385

B. BOMBAY 0077

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C. MADRAS 0040

1. WE HAVE BEEN VERY INTERESTED IN RECENT SERIES OF REPORTS FROM BOMBAY ABOUT CONDITIONS IN GUJARAT AND MAHARASHTRA AND HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHEN (BUT NOT WHETHER) SIMILAR VIOLENCE WILL ERUPT HERE. IN FACT, WE ARE AT A LOSS TO KNOW WHY IT HASN'T YET. THERE ARE SHORTAGES IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE COMMODITY AND ACROSS THE BOARD PRICE INCREASES HAVE CAUSED SOME DEMONSTRATIONS (CYLCUTTA 2257) AND UNIVERSAL DISSATISFACTION WITH APPARENT GOVT. UNCONCERN. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD OF THE FOUR MAJOR EASTERN STATES, BIHAR, ORISSA AND ASSAM HAVE HAD GOOD CROPS AND THE STATE GOVTS., IN THE FIRST TWO STATES HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED ANY PROCUREMENT SO THE TRADITIONAL MARKET CARRIES ON AS USUAL. ASSAM'S ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER THE RICE TRADE HAS, WE THINK, FALTERED DUE TO THE WEAKNESS OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT, THE WEAKNESS OF THE COOPERATIVES WHO WERE TO ADMINISTER THE TAKEOVER AND THE RECENT STRIKE OF GOVT. EMPLOYEES WHICH BADLY AFFECTED ADMINISTRATION IN ALL FIELDS.

2. WEST BENGAL, HOWEVER, PRESENTS A DIFFERENT PICTURE. THE STATE GOVT. HAS MANAGED TO PROCURE VIRTUALLY NO GRAINS, ALTHOUGH IT TALKS AND HAS TAKEN SOME ACTIONS (CORDONING OF DISTRICTS, WITH SOME ATTEMPT AT ENFORCEMENT) WHICH HAVE HAD THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF KEEPING CALCUTTA UNDERSUPPLIED. ON JAN 10 FIELDTRIP, POLITICAL SECTION MEMBERS TOURED DISTRICT IMMEDIATELY SOUTH OF CALCUTTA AND WERE TOLD BY VILLAGERS THAT NEITHER GOVT. AGENCIES NOR CONGRESS ACTIVISTS HAVE ATTEMPTED TO PROCURE ANY GRAINS. HARVESTS WERE GOOD, THEY SAID, BUT THE GOVT. PRICE IS SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW THAT OF THE FREE MARKET. MEANWHILE, DEPENDENCE ON CENTRAL SOURCES FOR FOODGRAINS CONTINUES AS BEFORE--ONLY FOR THE PAST MONTH CR SO THE STREAM OF GRAINS AND OTHER MATERIALS (KEROSENE, SUGAR, WHEAT FLOUR AND ALMOST EVERY OTHER NECESSITY OF LIFE FOR THE AVERAGE INDIAN) HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY REDUCED. QUEUES ARE SEEN EVERYWHERE IN CALCUTTA. THERE WAS NO BREAD FOR SEVERAL DAYS LAST WEEK. POWER SHORTAGES ARE ON THE INCREASE AGAIN. AND ON IT GOES.

3. BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO EXPLOSION. WHEN IT WILL COME WE CANNOT PREDICT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT IT COULD COME AT ANY TIME.

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WE DO NOT SEE MUCH EVIDENCE THAT THE CPI(M) HAS BEEN ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS SAD STATE OF AFFAIRS NOR THAT THE CONGRESS IS OPERATING OUT OF MUCH SENSE OF URGENCY. WE PARTICULARLY LIKE YOUR CONCLUSION THAT ANY RULING PARTY WILL HAVE TO FACE SAME DILEMMAS AND SITUATIONS WHICH CONFRONT CONGRESS. THE KIND OF RELATIVELY EASY RESHUFFLING OF THE ELITE (I.E., A NEW CHIEF MINISTER, REORGANIZING THE CABINET, INVITING A COUPLE OF CONGRESS (O) LEADERS TO JOIN CONGRESS

(R), ETC.) DOESN'T HOLD OUT ANY PROSPECT OF HELPING THE
SITUATION.
ROSSELOT

UNQTE
MOYNIHAN

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